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MAINLY ANENT THE DECALOGUE.

FOR a period of eight months or more we have been explaining that "ideas" of the static kind commonly called "absolute," i.e., those which do not with more or less speed dissolve into ascertained fact, are delusions of intelligences too feeble to be quite aware of what they speak. It appears that a proportion of our readers, mindful of past benefits no doubt, have tolerated the broaching of this subject with only a very strained patience: and that now, at long length, with a pained realisation that the theme shows no sign of flagging, they are driven to ask whether we are not buffooning. "Are we in earnest? Have we *none* of the standard (i.e. absolute) ideas?" We therefore propose here to make a number of forthright statements on the absolute virtues which are associated with the injunctions promulgated in the decalogue. After that, we shall make no further comment on questions as to whether we are "earnest." Before dealing with the concepts bolstered up by the commandments it will serve us to notice an assumption relating to the "Search for Truth," for supported by "opinions" and "beliefs" merely a critic will only feel justified to the extent of advancing opposing arguments: but on the strength of his assumptions he will base reproaches. A reproachful one writes: "It is silly to be contemptuous of people who are *trying to get at Truth*." The assumption is clear and it is very widely adopted. It is considered that the making of an earnest Search for Truth should of itself ensure immunity from scoffs and jeers: that the "Search for Truth" represents an activity the worth of which will be self-evident, and that not to be in earnest about it is the mark which separates the "frivolous-

minded " from the "serious" man: "Are you in earnest or are you buffooning?" means "Do you enter into the debate on Truth seriously?" Our answer of course is that we are as earnest in the inquiry into the nature of Truth as—but no more than—any one of our readers would be in debating the question "What is a Boojum: or a Snark: or the Jubjub Bird?" We are quite prepared to agree that in the hunt for the Bird of Truth (whereon see Miss Olive Schreiner) as in the Hunt for the Snark, all methods of search are equally worthy of respect, and equally admitted of, and that the choice should be left to individual preference.

"Do all that you know, and try all that you don't" is applicable in both cases.

"You may seek it with thimbles and seek it with care,

You may seek it with forks and hope,
Threaten its life with a railway-share
Charm it with smiles and soap."

Or if you are a modern reformer—a rebel or a suffragist—you will go as well in the search and as far by vigorous clapping of hands, by a tract on venereal disease, or best of all by a throb and a whirl inside your head.

"For 'Truth' is a peculiar creature and won't
Be caught in a commonplace way!"

but like the Snark, if and when discovered may be put to all manner of uses! One may

"Serve it with greens in shadowy scenes
Or use it for striking a light."



It was our set intention to rule out from these notes on the Decalogue every ambiguity, all irony, every suggestion of the frivolous and pert which possibly might mislead. It is therefore in order to be unmistakable or nothing that we protest the serious, profoundly important philosophic character of "The Hunting of the Snark." With uplifted hand—not that it matters—we declare that we are most lugubriously solemn in making this stipulation that we be allowed—generously and without reservation—to laugh at all Searchers after Truth. It is precisely what they are there for: to be laughed at at the start when the searchers are fresh: jeered at when they keep the performance going to such length that we become tired. They are in precisely the same position as a comic singer, who sings his songs to provoke amusement at their initial essaying: perhaps he may rely on the quality of its jokes to risk repeating it before the same audience twice: but he would know what to expect were he to repeat it half-a-dozen times. Similarly with the methods of the Searchers for Truth, which though varied in detail have a common accompaniment of noisy reiteration, apparently resulting from a species of convulsion brought on by the chanting of words. These methods though amusing at the outset, if continued swiftly become matters meet only for jeers; jeers appearing to have the salutary effect of putting a brake on the wild whirling of the word-intoxicated heads. (All the searchers, by the way, claim not to be searching for Truth but to have found it.) Bacon's observation to Pilate's scoffing question "What is Truth?" "And did not wait for an answer," is striking because it is prompt, not because it is discerning: it is really as inept as it is facetious. Probably the answer was beginning to be offered to Pilate when he cut in with the words of the Bellman, "Skip all that"; at any rate, Bacon might have reflected that the Roman governor would have had long to wait seeing that fifteen hundred years after, Bacon himself is only prepared to make a quibble concerning it. The fact of the matter is that Truth is one of a class of words which have been born under the two-fold impulse of (1) haste to make a finished statement, (2) doubt as to the grounds on which to make it. In the introduction to the "Hunting of the Snark" the process is beautifully analysed. Explaining how the "hard" words in the poem such as "snark" and "boojum" have come into existence, the author shows how they are the natural outcome of doubt and haste. "Supposing," he says "that, when Pistol uttered the words:—

"Under which king, Bezonian? Speak or die?"

Justice Shallow had felt certain it was either William or Richard, but had not been able to settle which, so that he could not possibly say either name before the other, can it be doubted that, rather than die, he would have gasped out "Rilchiam"? We can surmise that subsequently, if the memory of the circumstances under which the name "Rilchiam" had been coined were forgotten while the name still lingered there would undoubtedly have been established in history a puzzle which would have corresponded to the "ethical" puzzles of philosophy, "What is Truth?" "What is Justice?" "What is Chastity?" It would have run "Who was King Rilchiam?" All of which should explain why in refusing to take the conceptual ideas seriously we feel we understand the impatience of a Pilate or Bellman who dismissed these ancient wrangles with a "Let's skip all that."



It should now be clear to the most verbalised intelligence why we should consider it a ridiculous waste of our space and our readers' time to engage in any debate concerning "Morality" in gross,

or sub-divisions of "Morality," such as Honesty, Truthfulness, Piety and so on, in particular. We consider them one and all the "Rilchiams" of language, and far from being debated seriously, their forms should be expelled from Speech: except for purposes of gammon and make-believe. However, just as from the generalised form Rilchiam, a vague associated with an individual William or Richard can be made, so from the vague generalisations called "Morality" or "Honesty" special forms of action can be considered to be related. When therefore a correspondent asks in a bewildered way whether or no we believe in "Honesty" and then goes on to ask whether we run up accounts with tradesmen and shirk payment, we get a perfect example of the workings of what Weininger would have called the "henid" mind: the confused mind which works on a basis of loose association. [Weininger's description of the "henid" mind is extremely able and well worth attention. It is diverting to note that he used the term to characterise the intelligence of women and yet at the same time one of the principal points which he endeavoured to make against them was that they were incapable of constructing a generalisation!] However, no matter how achieved it is a mental relief to see the interrogation change from "What is Honesty?" to "Do you steal the goods of your grocer?" Though we capitulate at once to the difficulties of the first, to the second we can answer at once that it is not our privilege. We are not sufficiently well-off to make the experiment workable. But richer people are quite successful in this line, and we hasten to add that we have no scruples against robbing the grocer. We do not "respect" grocers' goods on any sort of principle: in fact we have been pointing out for months that the goods of the grocers of Dublin for instance could with great wisdom have been regarded as the strikers' own. "Snatch in as suave a manner as you can" would be our working basis; that is if you want something, but if necessity drives then "Snatch anyhow." The difference in method is such as that which exists between the methods used by bankers, financiers and the professional classes in general at the present time and that used by an army which commandeers food in war-time. It is a distinction in the amount of fuss, that is all. Do it gently if you can—and like it gentle—but anyhow "Do it." Those who can wait until their "share" is given them, will have a very wry story to tell: the tale of the "industrial problem." The poor who are too modest to "take," complain because more is not "given" them. They make the enormous mistake of thinking that "shares" are allocated on a principle: whereas in reality, each fixes his own share. The injunction in the decalogue is purposely (presumably) left unfinished, in order to allow an individual choice in the matter. "Thou shalt not steal" means nothing. Not merely does it neglect to say "Thou shalt not steal"—rent, profit or interest; it does not even specify "tradesmen's goods" nor even free rides on the London Tube, on the manoeuvring of which we think we could give valuable information to penniless and foot-weary pedestrians. It just leaves it conveniently blank for those to fill in whose particular "order" happens to be uppermost at the given moment. For it is obvious that the whole of "life" is based on a system of "stealing": that is a forcible laying hold of required commodities without permission. We "take" the life of bird, beast or vegetable, and cut short their struggles to survive without as much as a "by your leave." It is only where one power or confederation of powers has become supreme that the question of "theft" arises at all. The proper answer to the questions, "Under what circumstances is 'taking' tantamount to thieving?" And "Under what circumstances is 'stealing' 'immoral'?" can be found by asking the analogous questions "When is it a 'crime' to breathe?" or "When is breathing immoral?" The

answer being of course, "When someone has you securely by the throat"—"When you can't manage it, that is."



It is manifest even to the least observant of human beings that the embargo on appropriation of goods is laid only by those who are powerful enough to retain possession of them. It has no relation whatever to the producing, i.e. the growing or making, of them: and we venture to say it never will have. If the time ever arrives when "each produces his own" and the "right" of each to retain what is produced is "respected" it will be because the power of defence of each, either singly or in the requisite combinations is such as to produce "balance." As long as there exist those whose power of attack and defence is obviously lower than that of others there will be an embargo placed on the appropriation of produce even by the producers. The power of self-appropriation and of self-defence will always dictate the terms in virtue of which property is held: will always decide what is "just." If men could only size up the confused phrases and bid their orators "justice them no justice" and then turn their attention to the term "just" they would find it very well directed. That state of affairs is "just" which is presented by the balance of all the forces implicated. If one person can trample another down, rob him and leave him to make shift for himself as his remnant of strength will allow him: for him to do so would be "just." A thing to be "just" is to be as it can be: other things are merciful, pitiful and so on: but they are not "just." The best instance of the accurate use of the word "just" is in the little phrase "Just so," which means "Exactly"—a concurring that things are as they are. When therefore the mob are persuaded that they must not steal in the manner prohibited by statutory law under the impression that to refrain is not merely "legal" but "just," they are acting under the hypnotism of habit and familiar association. The most efficacious way of dealing with this hypnotic spell which at present is so forceful that a policeman's job is on the whole one suited to the powers of superannuated invalids—soft, because the necessary work is performed by that mental inhibition which plays the policeman, i.e. the thing called Conscience—the most efficacious way of dealing with it is by reflecting on the reason why two terms should invariably be placed together. The commandment "Thou shalt not steal—in certain ways"—is embodied in a legal embargo as to method issued in the joint names of Law-and-Order. When a particular embargo becomes too annoying attention is usually directed on the iniquities of *Law*, but the meaning of "law" and of the "state" which gives "law" weight only becomes intelligible when what is supported under the name of "Order" is clearly understood. "Order" has nothing to do with "tidiness" or "harmony," or any "concept." It is merely an *arrangement of things* to suit an individual whim. First let the individual know what he wants at any particular moment and the arrangement which fits in with that want to him is "order." A "model" housewife will consider things "in order" when the chairs and tables are in those places which please her fancy (and very probably that of no one else); a gang of assassins arranging to blow up a city by means of dynamite would consider everything "in order" when everything was *en train* for the successful accomplishing of the deed. One General Smut is now maintaining "order" in South Africa by well-known lamblike means: "order" is successfully maintained in England on a basis of squalor and want. "Order" then may be defined as the arrangement that fits in with the whim of a particular person or that of a rough compromise of a group of persons: that and no more. There are therefore as

many forms of "order" as there are people: each individual and unique; and each one's plan of "order" may vary from day to day according to needs. There is then not *one* "order" as it is left to us to conjecture when we are told that "order" must be maintained, but literally innumerable orders. It is as though people were agreeable to dividing up numbers on a regular plan but with the lengths of the divisions different in each case: one taking alternate odds, another alternate evens, another every third number and so on. Bergson has worked out the theory of "order" of course in "Creative Evolution." As far as we are aware its application to "law" has still to be made. This application is pretty obvious. A statutory law is the expression of some one view of order, some arrangement agreeable to an individual whim, forced on the rest of the community under threat or execution of physical violence—which violence under the guise of armies and police is maintained by the assistance of the very people whose own plans of order will be crushed by its agency. Mainly because they are stupid but also in some degree because they are timorous and mean-spirited, what though well-meaning and industrious, the "people" who support the "state" acquiesce in the self-abnegating ordinances of the state which are precisely designed to frustrate their own schemes of "order." This is the gist of "democracy," i.e. "government by consent." It is quite clear then why there are "laws" against "stealing" of one kind and no laws against far bolder "stealing" of another. The laws against "petty thefts" are made and administered with a right good will: the major thefts of rent profit and interest—the wholesale "lifting" of property are the admired achievements of our "governing classes." The "governing classes" represent a group of individuals whose "schemes of order" have a "natural" affinity for each other: as for analogy one might suggest that all whose numerical divisions happened to be multiples of others must coincide at points: he whose "plan" was "One, four, eight, twelve, sixteen," would find it coinciding at points with his whose plan was "One, eight, sixteen, twenty-four," and so on. The rough compromises arrived at among the members of this group in nowise cancel out the individual differences; the members of the "classes" are prepared to wrangle among themselves, as in the party-system. But they understand their position and smother their dissensions and close their ranks immediately against those whose divisions represent "prime numbers" to theirs—the poor-poor. That is all there is in Law-and-Order. The "morality" red-herring which is dragged into the matter is the creation of the feeble-witted poor who have just so much spirit as would lead them to despise their cowardly acquiescing if it were exposed, naked in the light of day. Their retention of it is of course encouraged by the "governors" since it serves them in the capacity of a most efficient police.



In addition to the main injunction against unauthorised stealing, the decalogue works in the theme in two minor texts: Number ten: "Thou shalt not covet," &c., and number seven: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The first of course is exhorting Conscience not to forget its vocation: to play up and be a policeman. Not merely "Do not allow the natural man whom you have in charge to steal what he shouldn't: don't allow him even to want to." It is on the principle of using preventive methods early, as one cannot be too careful.

In the seventh injunction one recognises in "Adultery" another of the class of "Rilchiam": and dismisses it. Concerning what this commandment means as distinct from what it says, it is clear that it is a warning against using other people's property. It would call for no remark additional to those made

anent the eighth did it not illustrate how vain is the belief in the "rights" of possession: that possession is not merely nine but ten parts of the law: that an "owner" should be as ready to defend his property with as unremitting a zeal as that with which an early Christian guarded his soul to prevent the devil snatching it away. What is called the "free love" argument is an exposition of the vanishing of the claims of "right" in face of the power of "might": a fact which leaves a "conceptualist" as nonplussed as a merchant would be if bales of goods assigned to the ownership and warehouse of Mr. Smith were to find voice and legs and say "We are only labelled Smith: we prefer to belong to Mr. Jones." If thereupon they held to Mr. Jones and Mr. Jones held to them, it would be poor consolation to Smith to know that he had a "right" to them. He would find himself in the same situation as the "workers" who work and think they have a "right" to what they produce and can prove it to you by ten different lines of argument; but who are bereft of the goods none-the-less. One can only say that it is their business to find out why their ears are boxed: also why their pockets and stomachs are empty.



In the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," the ruse employed is identical with that employed in number eight. Obviously we live only because we are prepared to kill—bird, beast, fish, plant and anything which stands between us and the opportunity to kill these; to kill is the first necessity of living; therefore the injunction cannot be, as it appears, a general prohibition of killing; it refers apparently to "killing" under special circumstances and the specification is merely left blank to allow "governors" to fill in the bill to fit their convenience. When killing is done contrary to the specialised restrictions selected by governors it becomes "crime" and is called "murder." To understand why killing at times is, and at other times is not murder, one must turn not to law, but to the theory of "order." "Order" is that arrangement of things—including people—which fits in with the whim of an individual, or an individualised group. If the "order" of those who are maintained in their position of governors demands the killing of certain people, as it does in a war, in overworking to make profits, or any of the thousand ways in which the lives of the common people are jeopardised and "taken"—then "killing is no murder." It is instead, "patriotism" or "bold statesmanship." But if the common people begin to think that the ways of the governing parties are incompatible with their ideas of "order" and they take to killing: then killing is murder: double-dyed, heinous: a hideous, heart-shuddering blasphemous affront to God and man: to the universe, to "morality," to the heavenly host and all the troops of angels, and *must be avenged*. So, Call out the entire army and navy and see that God and the Church are busied up!!!! Killing then is murder and no doubt about it.



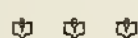
To the fifth and fourth we need give little space. The fifth is one which most of us are fairly well able to reckon up. "To honour God"—or the "king" is one thing. We have not lived with God and the king: but with parents most of us have lived and very early in life the "command" to "honour" them becomes a dictate of supererogation. If we *know* people well enough, most of us are able to bestow credit where credit is due: and to withhold it on the same terms. Number four can be referred to any week-end. We need not flog a dead horse. The meaning of the Sabbath day was that it was to be kept "holy": used for the indoctrinating of the "holy ideas." Six days are as long a period as a

"natural" man can go without being reminded of the holy ideas: the seventh day is to be set aside for the renewing of allegiance to the "sacred" names. In an article in our last issue we explained why certain names were to be kept "sacred": because if questioned their "essence" would vanish: the name was the thing. We refer our readers again to that explanation, which will enable us to "explain" the import of the third commandment almost in a word. "Thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless" and so on. That is: the name of God is not to be questioned: it is to be left—a name above all names—undesecrated by a "natural" man's inquiry. "God's" identity is not to be inquired into: a prohibition which puts the first and second commandment out of reach of a danger which very closely threatens them. "Thou shalt have no other gods but Me." (Of this the second is a continuation and enlargement.) It is only the fact that inquiry into the identity of the "Me" is forbidden which prevents the identifying of the two persons of the injunction. Suppose the "Thou" and "Me" are one and the same? If they are one and the same, the whole heavenly structure dissolves in mere sound in the ears of the natural triumphant man—the egoist. Valuable indeed to the conceptualists are the uses of the "Sacred"!



Of the ten, the ninth remains: the injunction against "bearing false witness," to which we would add "lying" in general, we have purposely postponed to the last, because it has to do with a different order of values from the remaining nine. To be forbidden to "bear false witness" and to be forbidden to "steal" implies that one is in possession of the power to effect their contraries: an assumption which can by no means go without question. It is within the power of any either to steal or not to steal (within the prescribed limits): but it is not in the power of all to "bear true witness." A dog—or a member of any other sub-human species—can steal: it can also be terrorised into not stealing. But to "bear witness" either truly or falsely is a business which involves a development of the power of being "aware" to its self-conscious degree. It is a power of life as yet in its incipient stage, and for the majority of human beings it is in too confused a period for them to be able to say with certainty what their perceptions are, except in the simplest and most often repeated operations of sense such as seeing and hearing. Even these often lie within a mist too hazy for many knowingly to bear "true" witness. Many witnesses for instance in police-court proceedings could not say whether they were speaking truly or not, if they became excited, and if finally it should be proved that they have been "lying," it is not proved that they have deliberately "borne false witness": it is quite as fair to believe that they were incapable of deciding what was true. It is not often that witnesses lie handsomely. There are comparatively few people who can lie boldly and deliberately. To do so requires too precise a perception as to what is "true." The reason why the "evidence" of so many witnesses who are half-consciously "lying" breaks down under cross-examination is that the witnesses have not perceived the facts well enough to know just how these will be effected should some of them be described contrarily to the manner in which they occurred. Apart however from either the confused or deliberate lying about simple facts, we have the great stack of lies concerning emotions which has been piled up half-consciously and half-unconsciously by more highly developed people, under the name of Culture and which are supposed to comprise

"Truth." "Culture" is the outcome of Gadding Minds—minds, that is, which are dull "at home," and which have fallen in gladly with the notion that there is a "Truth" which can be come at by assiduous and ingenious manipulation of phrases. They are very willing to attempt short cuts to understanding especially if they can in that way travel with a crowd of gadders like themselves. The culture-epoch of the last two thousand years will have to pass before the Searchers for Truth begin to inquire "at home": to understand that the only things which are "true" for them are the few things which their own individual power to perceive makes them aware of through the channels of their senses. Their present habit of Hunting for Truth with thimbles and forks, anchors and care, clappers, tracts and a wild whirling sound will help them as far towards awareness as—to use an analogy we have used before—the presentation of bound volumes of the works of Darwin will help the jelly-fish up the ascent of being. The clutter of cultural concepts—mere words—are choking the frail fine tentacles of perception: preconceived notions hang as a film over the eyeballs and until they can slip the entire burden their way in life will be mad and melancholy.



The great difference therefore between the eighth and ninth commandments could be gathered from some such summary as this: "Steal as efficiently as you can if you want to or need": it is the unquestionable method of regal and noble appropriation. But, "If you can avoid lying, or can bear true witness, do so—from your own advantage. The power to do so is a capacity, feeble but capable of growing, and is on the one line of human growth discernible. It makes that which is merely conscious self-conscious. It needs every encouragement: practice and training. It is not that "bearing false witness" is wrong (if swearing away the character of a threatening tiger falsely would save one from danger, it would be a strange person who would refrain from swearing falsely; and the same holds good in respect of many of the "tight corners" in relation to fellow human beings, which we occasionally find we have run into in this life.) Right and wrong save for conceptualists have no meaning: but that bearing false witness, and every form of lying and half-lying tends to weaken a power which is weak enough, but which is the highest reach to which vital power has, as yet, risen. To bear true witness comprises human genius. No wonder therefore with a culture made of lies, i.e. false observations, genius looks as though it were about to flicker out, or that, though we may do many apparently despicable things for money and property, we are aware of what we are doing when we regard the man who plays the charlatan and prostitutes his powers of observation as a fool in the deepest sense of the word.

(To be Continued.)

Sayings of K'ung.

Selected, with an introduction, by

ALLEN UPWARD.

XI.

OTHER SAYINGS.

HE who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray.

* * * *

Things that are done, it is needless to speak about; things that have had their course, it is needless to remonstrate about; things that are past, it is needless to blame.

* * * *

Man is born for uprightness.

* * * *

They who know are not equal to those who love knowledge, and they who love it are not equal to those who delight in it.

* * * *

The commander of the forces of a large State may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him.

* * * *

Can men refuse to assent to the words of strict admonition? But it is reforming the conduct because of them which is valuable. Can men refuse to be pleased with words of gentle advice? But it is unfolding their aim which is valuable. If a man be pleased with these words, but does not unfold their aim; and assents to those, but does not reform his conduct, I can really do nothing with him.

* * * *

I have not seen one who loves virtue as he loves beauty.

* * * *

Hard is the case of him who will stuff himself with food the whole day, without applying his mind to anything. Are there not gamblers and chess-players? To be one of these would still be better than doing nothing at all.

* * * *

Respectfulness, without the rules of propriety, becomes laborious bustle. Carefulness, without the rules of propriety, becomes timidity. Boldness, without the rules of propriety, becomes insubordination. Straightforwardness, without the rules of propriety, becomes rudeness.

* * * *

The Master said,—"It is according to the rules of propriety," they say. Are gems and silks all that is meant by propriety? "It is music," they say. Are bells and drums all that is meant by music?"

* * * *

He who puts on the appearance of stern firmness while inwardly he is weak, is like one of the small, mean people;—yea, is he not like a thief who breaks through or climbs over a wall?

Two Books.

I.—PROMENADES LITTÉRAIRES.*

I CANNOT quite explain why I am often guilty of preferring old books and modern miscellaneous essays about old books to the most marvellous and stupendous productions of living genius. How incredible and foolish that anyone should choose to read the yellowing pages of some dusty immortal rather than the fresh-smelling leaves of Dr. Bridges and Mr. Hardy! The newest writers hardly count; their works are certainly as obscure and often as little read as any forgotten worthy of old. I cannot bring myself to read those works which are considered an integral part of modern European culture; I am guiltless of Strindberg, Nietzsche, and Signor d'Annunzio, of Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Wells. Truly, old Burton and Pietro Myrteo and his like, Bergk's *Fragments* and the *Gull's Horn Book* are different matters. Half one's reading time now is wasted in the perusal of "classical" nineteenth century authors, whom "everybody must read." The devil take the nineteenth century. Now that it has become "classical" it is merely a conspiracy of the authors' heirs to prevent the reading of interesting books.

Thus it happens that in M. de Gourmont's fifth series of *Promenades Littéraires* I relish most "*Le Roman de Guillaume de Machaut at de Péronne d'Armentières*." To my shame I confess that before I read M. de Gourmont's little essay I never heard of either of these people, and, after reading it, I even suspected that they had never existed outside the imagination. The British Museum catalogue sets us all right; almost a whole page of that biggest book in the world is given up to editions of Machaut. A couple of mornings spent with the poems of Guillaume and the learned remarks of his editor, M. Chichmaref, will instruct my reader in the sources of M. de Gourmont's essay. There may be read quantities of well-conceited ballades and lais and rondeaux, all on the inexhaustible subject of Amor. There may be read curious and erudite speculations on the probable date of Guillaume's birth, on the symptoms of gout which attacked him in his later life, on the pilgrimage he made when he recovered, and, best of all, a notable discussion on the identity of his mistress, one Tarbe leaning towards a certain Agnès de Navarre, while P. Paris and others (among them M. de Gourmont and the excellent M. Chichmaref) decline upon a Mademoiselle Péronne d'Armentières. But you will not find there that re-creative faculty and fanciful sensuality of M. de Gourmont by whose means he turns the almost forgotten "legend" of these two people into as interesting a novelette as the tale of Abelard and Héloïse. The letters of Péronne, as they are printed in P. Paris' edition of Machaut, are simple and prettily amorous. M. de Gourmont has a pleasingly cynical view of Péronne's motives in this bizarre affair, which began by the lady's (aged 19) sending the poet (aged about 60) a rondeau and an affectionate letter, which culminated in un-chivalric manner by the lady becoming the poet's mistress, and which ended by her neglecting him entirely—"dropping" him, as we should say. M. de Gourmont thinks that in the main she was influenced merely by the desire of acquiring reputation—notoriety, fame, what you will—through having been the mistress of one of the most famous poets of the time. Perhaps that is true; M. de Gourmont has a great

knowledge of the modern female character: it is not so easy to know the fourteenth century woman; as Flaubert remarked, we can only guess at the characters of the women of history, for we can never *know* them. At any rate, the lives and correspondence of these two curious people have given M. de Gourmont materials for a pleasant little "histoire" very much in his manner; and he has managed to extract some readable quotations from their bulky works—works which, on the whole, are better to write about than to read.

Some of the articles in this volume are sufficiently deep in the nineteenth century to make them, for me, quite unreadable. Leon Dierx is not particularly objectionable; his was a gentle unobtrusive personality, and the noise he makes in the great blare o' modern authorship is so slight that it may very well be musical. But who can take a warm fraternal interest in Alfred de Vigny, in the quarrels of the bouncing de Balzac and the severe Saint-Beuve, in the originality of Maître Maeterlinck, and in the novels of the Goncourt brothers? More readily I turn to the pages in which M. de Gourmont talks learnedly of the art of gardens and of the Abbé Delille, hearing with pleasure that both these elegant authors prefer the English garden, with its "ordered wantonness," its wilderness and untrimmed borders to the oppressive geometrical exactness of the French garden. A slight plea should be put up for the topiary art, undeservedly decried in this essay; what can be happier, more pleasant to the sight than those shrubs of box cut into birds and globes which greet us at Hampton Court and in the Dutch Garden at Kensington? And while I am speaking of quaint out-of-doors things it is opportune to mention a curious slip made in the essay on Shakespeare in this book. M. de Gourmont speaks of Walton's "*Compleat Angler*" as the "*Perfect Angler*," and actually writes us if he believed that Shakespeare had read the works of the amiable Isaak, when, as a fact, the *Compleat Angler* was not published until 1653, nearly forty years after Shakespeare's death! Béranger, dissected and dismissed; Petronius and his French translator, M. Tailhade; Maurice de Guérin, the author of *The Centaur*; and the French translators; these are some of the better essays. If it were not pedantic it would be interesting to ask why Remy Belleau's translation of the Alexandrian Anacreonics is called a translation of *Anacreon*. Too long have these "mignardises" been fostered upon the kindly "Teian bard." The theory that Petronius did not mean Nero by his character of Trimalchio is an interesting one, but requires a long discussion. Although M. de Gourmont brings forward some excellent arguments he has not quite proved his case, though I am willing to give him the story of how the *Satyricon* was written in day if he will give up some of the tales of Shakespeare's youth. Strange contrariety of sympathies! he who will not yield up the tale of Shakespeare holding horses at the theatre door, *because it is a myth*, labours with lexicon, Plutarch and Tacitus to disprove the legends which have gathered about the name of Petronius Arbiter!

CHANCE.*

Mr. Joseph Conrad, having furrowed with adventurous keel every ocean on the map save the Arctic and Antarctic, has now settled down to shore-life in company with the interminable, incorrigible, and, at last, match-making, Marlow. In *Chance* we have but little of the high seas, little of high deeds and high endeavours upon the mountainous seas; like a grown-up-people's novelist Mr. Conrad psychologises

* "*Promenades Littéraires*." Vc. Serie. Par Remy de Gourmont. (Paris. Mercure de France. 3f. 50.)

* "*Chance*." By Joseph Conrad. (Methuen. 6/-.)

profoundly, and unlike the dog of the scriptures he seldom returns &c. Chance is perhaps most like Lord Jim; it is not the Ballantynish, brain-thrilling yarn, like the whirling Typhoon and the adventurous Youth. Like (here we turn over the pages of Mr. Conrad's novel seeking unavailingly for an apt metaphor), like—like slow-boiling oil the pathos and terror of Chance scorch our passive minds; like too-courteous hosts we endure the long-drawn exact sentences and irritating interruptions which have now become the distinction of Marlow. There was a time—it must have been anterior to Sterne—when a story-teller began—at the beginning, went on—through the middle, and ended—at the end. In Chance we have a short digression of some two hundred and eighteen pages before we return to the scene which terminates chapter one. The great Lawrence (Sterne, not D. H.) could hardly have done better. The narrative slides from "I" to Marlow to Powell to the impersonal and back again, like a story of a scandal told by four impatient ladies. What matter? it is marvellously told, like—like all Mr. Conrad's stories. Like a well-trained dancer gliding through a crowded ball-room the practised reader passes through Mr. Conrad's chapters without colliding with any of them. Bewilderment, expectation and intense concentration may sit figuratively upon the reader's brow, but in the end he will set down Chance with a sigh and with the remark that it is an uncommonly rum yarn. The close analytic treatment resembles that in the middle novel in "Twixt Land and Sea Stories"; I think it is called "A Slice of Fortune." The half-mad, sensitive, over-strained mind of Flora de Barrel is rendered with amazing exactness, like a watch telling the time. The Fynes are so carefully and, again, exactly presented that we recognise at once their superiority to the hideous bourgeois relative, who, indeed, is like nothing but his own horrible self. Captain Anthony, the first mate and the second mate, the steward and the man-at-the-wheel—these we recognise as belonging to a class of phenomena familiar to Mr. Conrad from his boyhood. Even the portrait of what might have been, and probably was, Coventry Patmore, will delight the discriminating reader, as plum-cake delights a red-complexioned, well-digesting boy of thirteen years and five months.

The crown of laurel reposes upon Mr. Conrad's forehead; he stands among us as the foremost of that increasing band of foreigners who write English better than the natives of this island. He has a reputation which every other prose author in the British Islands ought to envy considerably. Though some of his books run the risk of appealing in the future only to adventurous-minded and semi-literary youth, he is yet certain of a chapter, a page, a paragraph in every future history of Literature written in the English Language. Mr. Conrad has produced that rarest of all things, an individual style. Without the delicate convolutions of Mr. Henry James and the too fragile allusiveness of Lionel Johnson, his style has at once the subtlety which the one possesses and the vividness which the other lacks. "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" has appeared upon the cinematograph; for Mr. Conrad's works the cinema could only be supererogatory; he is indeed the greatest "filmer" of modern literature; the Homer of the South Seas; the raconteur sans fin et sans reproche.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

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The New Sculpture.

I.

SOME nights ago Mr. T. E. Hulme delivered to the Quest Society an almost wholly unintelligible lecture on cubism and new art at large. He was followed by two other speakers equally unintelligible. With the artists themselves fighting through the obscurities of a new convention it is foolish, or very nearly so, to expect a critic—even an amateur critic—to put forth generalities which shall wholly satisfy both artist and public.

One may stand and say "I believe." One can say with equal dignity "This stuff is a d—n sight more interesting than Rodin at his plaster-castiest or than the Florentine Boy." But whether one can lay down axioms of criticism that will not only *have* but *convey* a meaning is a thorny outrageous question.

The Greeks!!! Even the Greeks whose sculpture reminds all rightly constituted young futurists of cake-icing and plaster of Paris; even the Greeks had one ideal for their drama and another for cutting stone. They had Praxiteles to make them super-fashion plates; immortal and deathless lay-figures, and they had tragedy to remind them of chaos and death and the then inexplicable forces of destiny and nothingness and beyond.

Their sculpture has at certain recurring periods been an ideal for super-æsthetes and matinee girls. The placid have excused the Greek drama by the Aristotelian fable that it was made for purgation, that you beheld Clytemnestra and then retreated home to do differently. You exhausted your unseen emotions by the use of vicarious horror and returned to an orderly life.

Of course the Greeks never did return to an orderly life. They were addicted to more disreputable vices than can be mentioned in modern society or even in "Modern Society." With the exception of a few plausible writers they were probably the most unpleasant set of people who ever existed, so that taking it all in all, it is not necessary to believe that the Aristotelian theory is pragmatical.

Mr. Hulme told us that there was *vital* art and *geometric* art. Mr. Lewis compared the soul to a bullet. I gathered from his speech that you could set a loaf of bread in an engine shop and that this would *not* cause said loaf to produce cubist paintings.

A third speaker got himself disliked by saying that one might regard the body either as a sensitized receiver of sensations, or as an instrument for carrying out the decrees of the will (or expressing the soul, or whatever you choose to term it). These two views are opposed and produce two totally opposed theories of æsthetic. I use the word æsthetic paradoxically, let us say two theories of art.

Finding this statement unfavourably received and wishing to be taken for a man of correct and orthodox opinions; trimming his words to the wind, he then said that you could believe that man was the perfect creature, or creator, or lord of the universe or what you will, and that there was no beauty to surpass the beauty of man or of man as conceived by the late Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema; or that on the contrary you could believe in something beyond man, something important enough to be fed with the blood of hecatombs.

This last seemed to cheer the audience. Mr. Hulme had also expressed it.

II.

Humanism having had no chance in the occident, in life, I mean, save for an occasional decade which has usually been followed by some pest like the counter-reformation or Praise-God Barebones or the most estimable S. Webb & Co., Humanism has, I was about to write, taken refuge in the arts.

The introduction of Djinns, tribal gods, fetiches, etc. into the arts is therefore a happy presage.

The artist has been for so long a humanist! He has been a humanist out of reaction. He has had sense enough to know that humanity was unbearably stupid and that he must try to disagree with it. But he has also tried to lead and persuade it; to save it from itself. He has fed it out of his hand and the arts have grown dull and complacent, like a slightly uxorious spouse.

The artist has at last been aroused to the fact that the war between him and the world is a war without truce. That his only remedy is slaughter. This is a mild way to say it. Mr. Hulme was quite right in saying that the difference between the new art and the old was not a difference in degree but a difference in kind; a difference in intention.

The old-fashioned artist was like a gardener who should wish to turn all his garden into trees. The modern artist wishes dung to stay dung, earth to stay earth, and out of this he wishes to grow one or two flowers, which shall be something emphatically *not* dung, *not* earth. The artist has no longer any belief or suspicion that the mass, the half-educated simpering general, the semi-connoisseur, the sometimes collector, and still less the readers of the "Spectator" and the "English Review" can in any way share his delights or understand his pleasure in forces.

He knows he is born to rule but he has no intention of trying to rule by general franchise. He at least is born to the purple. He is not elected by a system of plural voting. There has been a generation of artists who were content to permit a familiarity between themselves and the "cultured" and, even worse, with the "educated," two horrible classes composed of suburban professors and their gentler relations.

This time is fortunately over. The artist recognises his life in the terms of the Tahitian savage. His chance for existence is equal to that of the bushman. His dangers are as subtle and sudden.

He must live by craft and violence. His gods are violent gods. A religion of fashion plates has little to say to him, and that little is nauseous. An art of the fashion plates does not express him.

There is a recognition of this strife in the arts—in the arts of the moment.

Those artists, so called, whose work does not show this strife, are uninteresting. They are uninteresting because they are simply insensible. And being insensible they are not artists.

One therefore says that Epstein is the only sculptor in England. One hears whispers of a man called Gill (the present author knows nothing about him). And more recently one has come into contact with the work of a young sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska (reproduced in this issue).

It is not to be denied that Mr. Epstein has brought in a new beauty. Art is to be admired rather than explained. The jargon of these sculptors is beyond me. I do not precisely know why I admire a green granite, female, apparently pregnant monster with one eye going around a square corner.

When I say that I admire this representation more than an earlier portrait of the same monster (in the shape of a question mark) I am told "It is more monumental."

These men work in an unchanging world. Their work permits no argument. They do not strive after plausibility. I think we are sick to death of plausibilities; of smooth answers; of preachers who "prophecy not the deaths of kings."

It is easier to get at our comfort, our exultation, our quiet in this new sort of sculpture, it is easier, I am trying to say, to get at or explain this by negative statements. We are sick to death of the assorted panaceas, of the general acquiescence of artists, of their agreement to have perfect manners, and to mention absolutely nothing unpleasant. We are

equally sick of the psycho-intellectual novel—the analytical method of pretending that all hateful things are interesting and worthy of being analysed and recorded.

Therefore this sculpture with its general combat, its emotional condemnation, gives us our strongest satisfaction.

A sculpture expressing desire, and aware of the hindrance, a sculpture recognising inertia and not trying to persuade us that there is any use in analysing that inertia into seven and seventy sorts of mental and temperamental debility, such a sculpture has come to us in good hour and all one can say is that one is grateful and that it is very difficult to express this gratitude.

Realism in literature has had its run. For thirty or more years we have had in deluge, the analyses of the fatty degeneration of life. A generation has been content to analyse. They were necessary. My generation is not the generation of the romanticists. We have heard all that the "realists" have to say. We do not believe in Eutopias, we accept all that the realist has said. We do not think his statement complete, for he has often dissected the dead and taken no count of forces. To the present condition of things we have nothing to say but "*merde*"; and this new wild sculpture says it.

The artist has been at peace with his oppressors for long enough. He has dabbled in democracy and he is now done with that folly.

We turn back, we artists, to the powers of the air, to the djinns who were our allies aforetime, to the spirits of our ancestors. It is by them that we have ruled and shall rule, and by their connivance that we shall mount again into our hierarchy. The aristocracy of entail and of title has decayed, the aristocracy of commerce is decaying, the aristocracy of the arts is ready again for its service.

Modern civilisation has bred a race with brains like those of rabbits and we who are the heirs of the witch-doctor and the voodoo, we artists who have been so long the despised are about to take over control.

And the public will do well to resent these "new" kinds of art.

EZRA POUND.

Poems.

BY AMY LOWELL.

THE PIKE.

In the brown water,
Thick and silver-sheened in the sunshine,
Liquid and cool in the shade of the reeds,
A pike dozed.
Lost among the shadows of stems
He lay unnoticed.
Suddenly he flicked his tail,
And a green-and-copper brightness
Ran under the water.

Out from under the reeds,
Came the olive-green light;
And orange flashed up,
Through the sun-thickened water,
So the fish passed across the pool,
Green and copper,
A darkness and a gleam,
And the blurred reflections of the willows, on the
opposite bank,
Received it.

THE CAPTURED GODDESS.

Over the housetops,
Above the rotating chimney-pots,
I have seen a shiver of amethyst,
And blue and cinnamon have flickered,
A moment,
At the far end of a dusty street.

Through sheeted rain
Has come a lustre of crimson,
And I have watched moonbeams
Hushed by a film of palest green.

It was her wings,
Goddess!
Who stepped over the clouds,
And laid her rainbow feathers
Aslant, on the currents of the air.

I followed her for long,
With gazing eyes and stumbling feet.
I cared not where she led me,
My eyes were full of colours:
Saffrons, rubies, the yellows of beryls,
And the indigo-blue of quartz;
Flights of rose, layers of chrysoprase,
Points of orange, spirals of vermilion,
The spotted gold of tiger-lily petals,
The loud pink of bursting hydrangeas.
I followed,
And watched for the flashing of her wings.

In the city I found her,
The narrow-streeted city,
In the market-place I came upon her,
Bound and trembling.
Her fluted wings were fastened to her sides with
cords,
She was naked and cold,
For that day the wind blew
Without sunshine.

Men chaffered for her,
They bargained in silver and gold,
In copper, in wheat,
And called their bids across the market-place.

The Goddess wept.

Hiding my face, I fled,
And the grey wind hissed behind me,
Along the narrow streets.

WHITE AND GREEN.

Hey! My daffodil-crowned,
Slim and without sandals!
As the sudden spurt of flame upon darkness
So my eyeballs are startled with you,
Supple-limbed youth among the fruit-trees,
Light runner through tasselled orchards.
You are an almond flower unsheathed
Leaping and flickering between the budded branches.

AUBADE.

As I would free the white almond from the green
husk,
So would I strip your trappings off,
Beloved.
And fingering the smooth and polished kernel
I should see that in my hands glittered a gem beyond
counting.

'THE PRECINCT. ROCHESTER.

The tall yellow hollyhocks stand,
Still and straight,
With their round blossoms spread open,
In the quiet sunshine.
And still is the old Roman wall,
Rough with jagged bits of flint,
And jutting stones,
Old and craggy,
Quite still in its antiquity.
The pear-trees press their branches against it,

And feeling it warm and kindly,
The little pears ripen to yellow and red.
They hang heavy, bursting with juice,
Against the wall.
So old, so still!

The sky is still.
The clouds make no sound
As they slide away,
Beyond the Cathedral Tower,
To the river,
And the sea.
It is very quiet,
Very sunny,
The myrtle flowers stretch themselves in the sun-
shine,
But make no sound.
The roses push their little tendrils up,
And climb higher and higher.
In spots they have climbed over the wall.
But they are very still,
They do not seem to move.
And the old wall carries them
Without effort, and quietly
Ripens and shields the vines and blossoms.

A bird in a plane-tree
Sings a few notes,
Cadenced and perfect
They weave into the silence.
The cathedral bell knocks,
One, two, three, and again,
And then again.
It is a quiet sound,
Calling to prayer,
Hardly scattering the stillness,
Only making it close in more densely.
The gardener picks ripe gooseberries
For the Dean's supper to-night.
It is very quiet,
Very regulated and mellow.
But the wall is old,
It has known many days.
It is a Roman wall,
Left-over and forgotten.

Beyond the cathedral-close
Yelp and mutter the discontents of people not mellow,
Not well-regulated.
People who care more for bread than for beauty,
Who would break the tombs of saints,
And give the painted windows of churches
To their children for toys.
People who say:
"They are dead, we live!
The world is for the living."

Fools! It is always the dead who breed.
Crush the ripe fruit, and cast it aside,
Yet its seeds shall fructify,
And trees rise where your huts were standing.
But the little people are ignorant,
They chaffer, and swarm.
They gnaw like rats,
And the foundations of the Cathedral are honey-
combed.

The Dean is in the Chapter House;
He is reading the architect's bill
For the completed restoration of the Cathedral.
He will have ripe gooseberries for supper,
And then he will walk up and down the path
By the wall,
And admire the snapdragons and dahlias,
Thinking how quiet and peaceful
The garden is.
The old wall will watch him,
Very quietly and patiently it will watch.
For the wall is old,
It is a Roman wall.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

BY JAMES JOYCE.

CHAPTER I.—continued.

THE bell rang for night prayers and he filed out of the study hall after the others and down the staircase and along the corridors to the chapel. The corridors were darkly lit and the chapel was darkly lit. Soon all would be dark and sleeping. There was cold night air in the chapel and the marbles were the colour the sea was at night. The sea was cold day and night; but it was colder at night. It was cold and dark under the sea-wall beside his father's house. But the kettle would be on the hob to make punch.

The prefect of the chapel prayed above his head and his memory knew the responses:

*O Lord, open our lips
And our mouth shall announce Thy praise.
Incline unto our aid, O God!
O Lord, make haste to help us!*

There was a cold night smell in the chapel. But it was a holy smell. It was not like the smell of the old peasants who knelt at the back of the chapel at Sunday mass. That was a smell of air and rain and turf and corduroy. But they were very holy peasants. They breathed behind him on his neck and sighed as they prayed. They lived in Clane, a fellow said: there were little cottages there and he had seen a woman standing at the half-door of a cottage with a child in her arms, as the cars had come past from Sallins. It would be lovely to sleep for one night in that cottage before the fire of smoking turf, in the dark lit by the fire, in the warm dark, breathing the smell of the peasants, air and rain and turf and corduroy. But, O, the road there between the trees was dark! You would be lost in the dark. It made him afraid to think of how it was.

He heard the voice of the prefect of the chapel saying the last prayer. He prayed it too against the dark outside under the trees.

*Visit, we beseech Thee, O Lord, this habitation
and drive away from it all the snares of the
enemy. May Thy holy angels dwell herein to
preserve us in peace, and may Thy blessing be
always upon us through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

His fingers trembled as he undressed himself in the dormitory. He told his fingers to hurry up. He had to undress and then kneel and say his own prayers and be in bed before the gas was lowered so that he might not go to hell when he died. He rolled his stockings off and put on his nightshirt quickly, and knelt trembling at his bedside and repeated his prayers quickly fearing that the gas would go down. He felt his shoulders shaking as he murmured:

God bless my father and my mother and spare them to me!
God bless my little brothers and sisters and spare them to me!
God bless Dante and Uncle Charles and spare them to me!

He blessed himself and climbed quickly into bed and, tucking the end of the nightshirt under his feet, curled himself together under the cold white sheets, shaking and trembling. But he would not go to hell when he died; and the shaking would stop. A voice bade the boys in the dormitory good-night. He peered out for an instant over the coverlet and

saw the yellow curtains round and before his bed that shut him off on all sides. The light was lowered quietly.

The prefect's shoes went away. Where? Down the staircase and along the corridors or to his room at the end? He saw the dark. Was it true about the black dog that walked there at night with eyes as big as carriage-lamps? They said it was the ghost of a murderer. A long shiver of fear flowed over his body. He saw the dark entrance hall of the castle. Old servants in old dress were in the ironing-room above the staircase. It was long ago. The old servants were quiet. There was a fire there but the hall was still dark. A figure came up the staircase from the hall. He wore the white cloak of a marshal; his face was pale and strange; he held his hand pressed to his side. He looked out of strange eyes at the old servants. They looked at him and saw their master's face and cloak and knew that he had received his death-wound. But only the dark was where they looked: only dark silent air. Their master had received his death-wound on the battlefield of Prague far away over the sea. He was standing on the field; his hand was pressed to his side; his face was pale and strange and he wore the white cloak of a marshal.

O how cold and strange it was to think of that! All the dark was cold and strange. There were pale strange faces there, great eyes like carriage-lamps. They were the ghosts of murderers, the figures of marshals who had received their death-wound on battlefields far away over the sea. What did they wish to say that their faces were so strange?

*Visit, we beseech Thee, O Lord, this habitation
and drive away from it all . . .*

Going home for the holidays! That would be lovely: the fellows had told him. Getting up on the cars in the early wintry morning outside the door of the castle. The cars were rolling on the gravel. Cheers for the rector!

Hurray! Hurray! Hurray!

The cars drove past the chapel and all caps were raised. They drove merrily along the country roads. The drivers pointed with their whips to Bodenstown. The fellows cheered. They passed the farmhouse of the Jolly Farmer. Cheer after cheer after cheer. Through Clane they drove, cheering and cheered. The peasant women stood at the half-doors, the men stood here and there. The lovely smell there was in the wintry air: the smell of Clane: rain and wintry air and turf smouldering and corduroy.

The train was full of fellows: a long long chocolate train with cream facings. The guards went to and fro opening, closing, locking, unlocking the doors. They were men in dark blue and silver; they had silvery whistles and their keys made a quick music: click, click: click, click.

And the train raced on over the flat lands and past the Hill of Allen. The telegraph poles were passing, passing. The train went on and on. It knew. There were lanterns in the hall of his father's house and ropes of green branches. There were holly and ivy round the pier-glass and holly and ivy, green and red, twined round the chandeliers. There were red holly and green ivy round the old portraits on the walls. Holly and ivy for him and for Christmas.

Lovely . . .

All the people. Welcome home, Stephen! Noises of welcome. His mother kissed him. Was that right? His father was a marshal now: higher than a magistrate. Welcome home, Stephen!

Noises . . .

There was a noise of curtain-rings running back along the rods, of water being splashed in the basins. There was a noise of rising and dressing and washing in the dormitory: a noise of clapping of hands as the prefect went up and down telling the fellows to look

sharp. A pale sunlight showed the yellow curtains drawn back, the tossed beds. His bed was very hot and his face and body were very hot.

He got up and sat on the side of his bed. He was weak. He tried to pull on his stocking. It had a horrid rough feel. The sunlight was queer and cold.

Fleming said:

— Are you not well?

He did not know; and Fleming said:

— Get back into bed. I'll tell McGlade you're not well.

— He's sick.

— Who is?

— Tell McGlade.

— Get back into bed.

— Is he sick?

A fellow held his arms while he loosened the stocking clinging to his foot and climbed back into the hot bed.

He crouched down between the sheets, glad of their tepid glow. He heard the fellows talk among themselves about him, as they dressed for mass. It was a mean thing to do, to shoulder him into the square ditch, they were saying.

Then their voices ceased; they had gone. A voice at his bed said:

— Dedalus, don't spy on us, sure you won't?

Wells's face was there. He looked at it and saw that Wells was afraid.

— I didn't mean to. Sure you won't?

His father had told him, whatever he did, never to peach on a fellow. He shook his head and answered no and felt glad.

Wells said:

— I didn't mean to, honour bright. It was only for cod. I'm sorry.

The face and the voice went away. Sorry because he was afraid. Afraid that it was some disease. Canker was a disease of plants and cancer one of animals: or another different. That was a long time ago then out on the playgrounds in the evening light, creeping from point to point on the fringe of his line, a heavy bird flying low through the grey light. Leicester Abbey lit up. Wolsey died there. The abbots buried him themselves.

It was not Wells's face, it was the prefect's. He was not foxing. No, no: he was sick really. He was not foxing. And he felt the prefect's hand on his forehead; and he felt his forehead warm and damp against the prefect's cold damp hand. That was the way a rat felt, slimy and damp and cold. Every rat had two eyes to look out of. Sleek slimy coats, little little feet tucked up to jump, black slimy eyes to look out of. They could understand how to jump. But the minds of rats could not understand trigonometry. When they were dead they lay on their sides. Their coats dried then. They were only dead things.

The prefect was there again and it was his voice that was saying that he was to get up, that Father Minister had said he was to get up and dress and go to the infirmary. And while he was dressing himself as quickly as he could the prefect said:

— We must pack off to Brother Michael because we have the collywobblers!

He was very decent to say that. That was all to make him laugh. But he could not laugh because his cheeks and lips were all shivery: and then the prefect had to laugh by himself.

The prefect cried:

— Quick march! Hayfoot Strawfoot!

They went together down the staircase and along the corridor and past the bath. As he passed the door he remembered with a vague fear the warm turf-coloured bogwater, the warm moist air, the noise of plunges, the smell of the towels, like medicine.

Brother Michael was standing at the door of the infirmary and from the door of the dark cabinet on his right came a smell like medicine. That came from the bottles on the shelves. The prefect spoke

to Brother Michael and Brother Michael answered and called the prefect sir. He had reddish hair mixed with grey and a queer look. It was queer that he would always be a brother. It was queer too that you could not call him sir because he was a brother and had a different kind of look. Was he not holy enough or why could he not catch up on the others?

There were two beds in the room and in one bed there was a fellow: and when they went in he called out:

— Hello! It's young Dedalus! What's up?

— The sky is up, Brother Michael said.

He was a fellow out of the Third of Grammar and, while Stephen was undressing he asked Brother Michael to bring him a round of buttered toast.

— Ah, do! he said.

— Butter you up! said Brother Michael. You'll get your walking papers in the morning when the doctor comes.

— Will I? the fellow said. I'm not well yet.

Brother Michael repeated:

— You'll get your walking papers. I tell you.

He bent down to rake the fire. He had a long back like the long back of a tramhorse. He shook the poker gravely and nodded his head at the fellow out of Third of Grammar.

Then Brother Michael went away and after a while the fellow out of Third of Grammar turned in towards the wall and fell asleep.

That was the infirmary. He was sick then. Had they written home to tell his mother and father? But it would be quicker for one of the priests to go himself to tell them. Or he would write a letter for the priest to bring.

Dear Mother,

I am sick. I want to go home. Please come and take me home. I am in the infirmary.

Your fond son,

Stephen.

How far away they were! There was cold sunlight outside the window. He wondered if he would die. You could die just the same on a sunny day. He might die before his mother came. Then he would have a dead mass in the chapel like the way the fellows had told him it was when Little had died. All the fellows would be at the mass, dressed in black, all with sad faces. Wells too would be there but no fellow would look at him. The rector would be there in a cope of black and gold and there would be tall yellow candles on the altar and round the catafalque. And they would carry the coffin out of the chapel slowly and he would be buried in the little graveyard of the community off the main avenue of limes. And Wells would be sorry then for what he had done. And the bell would toll slowly.

He could hear the tolling. He said over to himself the song that Brigid had taught him.

*Dingdong! The castle bell!
Farewell, my mother!
Bury me in the old churchyard
Beside my eldest brother.
My coffin shall be black,
Six angels at my back,
Two to sing and two to pray
And two to carry my soul away.*

How beautiful and sad that was! How beautiful the words were where they said *Bury me in the old churchyard!* A tremour passed over his body. How sad and how beautiful! He wanted to cry quietly but not for himself: for the words, so beautiful and sad, like music. The bell! The bell! Farewell! O farewell!

The cold sunlight was weaker and Brother Michael was standing at his bedside with a bowl of beef-tea. He was glad for his mouth was hot and dry. He

could hear them playing in the playgrounds. And the day was going on in the college just as if he were there.

Then Brother Michael was going away and the fellow out of Third of Granunar told him to be sure and come back and tell him all the news in the paper. He told Stephen that his name was Athy and that his father kept a lot of racehorses that were spitting jumpers, and that his father would give a good tip to Brother Michael any time he wanted it because Brother Michael was very decent and always told him the news out of the paper they got every day up in the castle. There was every kind of news in the paper: accidents, shipwrecks, sports and politics.

— Now it is all about politics in the papers, he said. Do your people talk about that too?

— Yes, Stephen said.

— Mine too, he said.

Then he thought for a moment and said:

— You have a queer name, Dedalus, and I have a queer name too, Athy. My name is the name of a town. Your name is like Latin.

Then he asked:

— Are you good at riddles?

Stephen answered:

— Not very good.

Then he said:

— Can you answer me this one? Why is the county of Kildare like the leg of a fellow's breeches?

Stephen thought what could be the answer and then said:

— I give it up.

— Because there is a thigh in it, he said. Do you see the joke? Athy is the town in the county Kildare and a thigh is the other thigh.

— O, I see, Stephen said.

— That's an old riddle, he said.

After a moment he said:

— I say!

— What? asked Stephen.

— You know, he said, you can ask that riddle another way.

— Can you? said Stephen.

— The same riddle, he said. Do you know the other way to ask it?

— No, said Stephen.

— Can you not think of the other way? he said.

He looked at Stephen over the bedclothes as he spoke. Then he lay back on the pillow and said:

— There is another way but I won't tell you what it is.

Why did he not tell it? His father, who kept the racehorses, must be a magistrate too like Saurin's father and Nasty Roche's father. He thought of his own father, of how he sang songs while his mother played and of how he always gave him a shilling when he asked for sixpence, and he felt sorry for him that he was not a magistrate like the other boys' fathers. Then why was he sent to that place with them? But his father had told him that he would be no stranger there because his granduncle had presented an address to the Liberator there fifty years before. You could know the people of that time by their old dress. It seemed to him a solemn time: and he wondered if that was the time when the fellows in Clongowes wore blue coats with brass buttons and yellow waistcoats and caps of rabbit-skin and drank beer like grown-up people and kept greyhounds of their own to course the hares with.

He looked at the window and saw that the daylight had grown weaker. There would be cloudy grey light over the playgrounds. There was no noise on the playgrounds. The class must be doing the themes or perhaps Father Arnall was reading out of the book.

It was queer that they had not given him any medicine. Perhaps Brother Michael would bring it back when he came. They said you got stinking stuff to drink when you were in the infirmary. But he felt better now than before. It would be nice

getting better slowly. You could get a book then. There was a book in the library about Holland. There were lovely foreign names in it and pictures of strange-looking cities and ships. It made you feel so happy.

How pale the light was at the window! But that was nice. The fire rose and fell on the wall. It was like waves. Someone had put coal on and he heard voices. They were talking. It was the noise of the waves. Or the waves were talking among themselves as they rose and fell.

He saw the sea of waves, long dark waves rising and falling, dark under the moonless night. A tiny light twinkled at the pierhead where the ship was entering: and he saw a multitude of people gathered by the water's edge to see the ship that was entering their harbour. A tall man stood on the deck, looking out towards the flat dark land: and by the light at the pierhead he saw his face, the sorrowful face of Brother Michael.

He saw him lift his hand towards the people and heard him say in a loud voice of sorrow over the waters:

— He is dead. We saw him lying upon the catafalque.

A wail of sorrow went up from the people.

— Parnell! Parnell! He is dead!

They fell upon their knees, moaning in sorrow.

And he saw Dante in a maroon velvet dress and with a green velvet mantle hanging from her shoulders walking proudly and silently past the people who knelt by the waters' edge.

(To be Continued.)

Agni Konda.*

THERE is a Flame whose light is Wisdom, whose warmth is Bliss, whose expansion is Power, whose form and colour are Beauty.

If we enter the limbs of power we experience the ever-expanding life, the fiat that forges the instruments of action, the phallic will, the forthgoing surge, the glory of conquest.

If we "come into the Eye and see" we pass from the dynamic into the static power which is understanding, the sky-Eye in which all things are seen and by which all things are ordered: Serenity.

Or if we "come into the Heart and feel" we blend both rest and action, for its pulsation is dynamic like the Hand, its position static like the Eye. The Heart is the Home of the Universe; Source and Presence-chamber.

The limbs give the glory of power, the eye the serenity of knowledge, the heart the bliss of intimacy, the intimacy of bliss. And all are Love. For the forthgoing of Love is power and dayspring, and its home-coming is the rapture of enfolding night, and the brightness in the eyes of Love is knowledge.

Nor is Beauty absent, for Beauty is the wedding-garment of Love, the body of Bliss, as Bliss is interior Beauty.

The nature of love as a fact in existence is a recognition that grows. It may even grow to be *the* fact of existence, so that where before we discerned love among many excellences we may find that they all fuse themselves in a common cognizance, as if this transmutation of life into love was ever going on. Thus the tenderness of Love is seen as preservation and poise; the strength of Love creation and expansion.

Sex is that manifestation of love which at present animates human activities like solar heat, irradiating a bright corona of emotion and art; the Cyprian goddess who rules the world.

* Sacred Fire.

The Rose of erotic love, with its fragrance of romance, is the Queen flower of humanity's garden, and though there are rarer blooms that open in the moonlit mountain height and on the still lagoon, yet they can only be culled when human hands have bled in gathering the fragrance of human love. As love's wild rose grows into the splendid flower of the Garden, so the passion of its crimson heart becomes the mystic rapture of the lotus-lily. For the image of the Rose is the fairness of the fleshly form, and its damask is the dawn of youth, whose passion grows not cold, but whose heart of love raised to the white heat of mystic rapture becomes incandescent in the petals of the lotus. The naked whiteness of the lily is the love-nature unveiled to its central spirituality—the lily sleeps in the rose.

Purity is not dilution, it is concentration. The essential spirit or the "active principle" is the powerful poison that needs at first to be diluted. The River of Life spurting forth from the Heart of Love like the bright fountain of the blood, flows slowly through the fleshly world dark and diluted with death. It is the office of love to change the Stygian stream into the River of Life.

The tide of life flows from the essential and pure to the dull and turbid. As the body grows old the bones become brittle, the arteries hard, the muscles stiff, while the mind becomes stereotyped in views and habits and prescribes all-important little formulas of living for itself. Youth, the Palace of plastic expression and pleasure is deformed into the prison of ancient predilections and pain—the Form becomes the fossil.

As a child is given a picture book, so the simple human spirit is given a picture world of painted dust, the concrete image. The written word follows the word that becomes flesh. Man first admires, then he wearies and then he asks the meaning, and learns that the form is the symbol only and that he must not identify the symbol with the life. The forms are illusions, yet the illusions are the great Teachers, teaching by approximation. We have not to blot out their lessons but to seize their vital message in a more sapient spirit. The flavour of life is so good that the momentary form must not impede the life from flowing to its ocean home.

Therefore it is written on the walls of the Mystic Hall of Learning, "Kill out desire for life,"* for in normal human consciousness the life and the form are indissolubly associated. Kill out attachment to any one mode of presentment in order that ever new manifestations may express the joy of a Creator who saw life was good and hallowed it, and of a Christ who came to give life more abundantly. Kill out desire for the limited vessel. Take the water of life freely.

The allurements of the form lies in the fact that it expresses the indwelling spirit, but in so far as it is static it ceases to do this, and this limitation that exists in the forms of our life must be transcended for life's sake. The abiding for which man craves and which is prefigured by outward localizing crustations is to be sought at the central source. The home-making instinct, the spirit of conservative policies, tells man he is created for "joy and rest, albeit to find them only lodged in the bosom of eternal things." The secret of the charm of individuality lies not in the limitation of the uniqueness but in so far as the form is a focus of infinite possibilities.

Like the animals that are fed at the Zoological Gardens at four o'clock, our hungry human natures anticipate their pleasures in the same way as they have grown to know them.

The Mind is the Master-Mason, but the Builder is also the Isolator. To turn the attention to one direction is to abstract it from another, and by segregating make an artificial whole. This illusionary quantitative

wholeness is the harbinger of real completeness which lies in the idea of focus, as a burning glass collects all the sun's beams to a point. Because our minds at present cannot apprehend without isolating, our imagery becomes idolatry. As long as we are confined to the "unreal particularizing consciousness" of "the mind that is the slayer of the real," so long we worship graven gods.

It is the analytical prowess of our logic-loving intellect that says *Lo here! Lo there!*

As the Greeks discerned, Form is Proteus or change. The reason why Form produces illusion is not only on account of its primary isolating action but because its gross nature in this world does not allow it to change rapidly enough. Old-age is forever setting in.

Still looking at the picture-world it is difficult to conceive life except as confined to the images of its partial presentment.

Form should follow the needs of the life as the accompaniment the melody. But our I-deal becomes I-dol, the form the fossil, Youth's palace of pleasure Age's prison of pain. If there was no yielding to the demands of the growing life the womb would also become the tomb. It is *because* the Rose of the Garden is so fair that it dies; it lives again white-robed in the lotus, as the Divine love is the resurrection of human tragedy.

The absorption, and even the usurpation of the attention, in sexual life, is as obvious a fact of human experience as the embarrassment that would conceal it.

The sexual instinct dominates the mind of the majority.

Mankind finds itself borne on by an impulse to reproduce that is far more than sufficient to insure race-maintenance. The tyranny of sex-hunger has its office in holding man's attention to a certain fact, and that fact is Union.

Where the senses are regarded as illusions, in sex love, the greatest of them all, we may look for the greatest teaching.

Marriage may be said to be, philosophically, the chief fact of life, because sex, the master-passion of the ages, urges life on to the Goal of universal union, the mystic Marriage.

In the pregnant dictum of Bergson, "We do not obtain an intuition from reality unless we have won its confidence by a long fellowship with its superficial manifestation."

If that is so it is a reason why the searchlight of consciousness is fixed so steadily on sex.

Behind sex lies that reality whose nature is ineffable by "matter-moulded forms of speech," but some suggestion of which may be gained from the testimony of those whom the World calls saints and mystics.

Their experience of participation in Divine Being while it contains the element of vastness is pre-eminently that of Intimacy. Now if we turn to our physical world for an analogy, we may ask which of the senses can be said to be the most intimate? That which gives us light or music or fragrance or savour or touch?

Though touch is the most common and diffuse, is there not a tendency for expression to culminate in Touch? Is it not capable of the greatest intensity? Through touch love breaks in a wave of final satisfaction.

The human touch
That means so much!

R. P. Poulain, S.J., in his scholarly work on Catholic Mysticism entitled "The Graces of Interior Prayer," asks if there may not be, like spiritual sight and hearing, a spiritual touch. "Everything happens *as if* there were a touch. The expression 'interior touch' is quite logically led up to by the fact already admitted that an interior touch is felt. In fact in the material order we make use of the

* "Light on the Path." M.C.

word touch each time we wish to show it is a question of knowing experimentally any object contiguous to us, while if an object is at a distance we make use of the words see and hear. And then it is not with the object itself that we enter into immediate relations, but the radiations and vibrations that it sends out to us. Now it is a question here of a spiritual object that is not remote; it manifests itself by uniting itself with us, dissolving into us as it were. And it is the word, touch, therefore, that best expresses the analogy."*

Teresa de Jesus, as she styled herself, says, "*On the full Union*":

"God enters the soul in a manner that prevents it from doubting, when returning to itself, that he was within it, and that it dwelt in Him."†

In "*Esoteric Christianity*," Mrs. Besant quotes Iamblichus as follows: "The union with transcendent deity is not so much knowledge or vision as ecstasy, coalescence, *contact*. . . . The system culminates in a mystical act."

Contactual Extasis with the Divine is that Goal of which the marriage ceremony is the first consecration and the nuptial union the first participation. The humblest sense is the echo of the highest. Human marriage is that degree of initiation into the Divine Nature that man can at present normally endure. If in this charnel-house of the beast it is possible for poor humanity to know so great a glory as the transports of sex-love, what indeed must the water of life be like at its pure source proceeding out of the Throne? If Man and Woman be so good to look upon, so fair to the flesh, how beautiful is that "absolute Beauty" on which Plato gazed—original and archetypal loveliness? The fairness of the creature cannot be lost in the Creator.

The pleasure of the multitude partakes of the nature of titillation, daily distraction, not serious pleasure. Says Dr. McTaggart, "*The Beatific Vision is good, so is a hottle of champagne*." Exactly, because it is likewise the Brahmic bliss, the difference is one of degree. That which sparkles in champagne is sunshine, transitory because it is pleasure as product and not as source. As there is no intellectual or emotional engagement in drinking a glass of wine, little of the whole nature participating in the act, the satisfaction can only be proportionate to its seriousness. Until we can drink deeply from the River of Life we must be suckled at the tiny rills of ephemeral joys from Nature's bosom. To revert to a former simile, this is the process of "winning its confidence by a long fellowship with its superficial manifestation." It is as if Life slept contentedly after the trickle of creature-comforts ere Love is braced for—shall we say—oceanic orgasm?

Touch, then, is the ultimate unitive principle. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."** The mystic lightning that reveals the underlying integrity of the pervading Presence.

While Man lives just looking to Nature for what he can get, from moment to moment with the aim of merely supporting the passing enjoyment, she tends him as a mother, for he is her child. His pleasures and pains are her praise and blame. He asks for gifts and receives his treasure-trifles. One of the children of the hours, for the hour he works; the rest is hazard and dream. Dimly he feels Nature wonderful, doubtfully he thinks of her.

In the morning of youth, says Emerson in effect, Earth's smiling face greets us, and our aspirations are Poetry; beautiful, peradventure true: then as we grow to the measure of manhood her countenance waxes stern and we *know* our Hope is Truth.

But before we reach that spiritual manhood which Emerson refers to, we must have left her long ago as the child and traversed many dark and devious ways. Not as the hungry child, doubting, timid, asking, but as the lover and the hero. It is the intuition of this deep truth that gives vitality to the Romance and Drama of human relationship. The Romantic and Dramatic exercise their spell on life and art because Romance and Drama are great fundamental facts underlying our existence, the cosmic mould in which the Universe is conceived, however transitory and evanescent their presented forms. The Tragedy of Death, the Romance of Love, is the whisper and shadow-play of the eternal Verities. Life being the allegory of the everlasting, we literally spend our years as a tale that is told.

Our capacity to love is our capacity to suffer, and it is the instinctive immortality of love that gives the sting to death, and constitutes the drama. Love is the sufferer of life, martyred in the flame of its own aspiration.

LEONARD A. COMPTON-RICKETT.
(*To be concluded.*)

Modern Dramatists.

I.

WHEN M. André Antoine thrust Realism on to the stage of his Théâtre Libre, there was more than slight excuse for youthful playwrights who confounded the energy of this dubious resurrection with that of life itself. In some few of Strindberg's plays they saw a master-craftsman face and subdue "the terrible moments" of life: in some fewer of Ibsen's they saw the spirit of life play a losing game with the forces of tradition and repression. I write of what was: the spirit of life has long since left the drama of realism. But in 1887 what wonder if the young playwrights of France, Germany and England were persuaded that they had found the source of dramatic vitality. They tore at scraps of life, they revised life for the English drawing-room, they were blatantly fearless, or rabidly "low." But of all M. Antoine's young men, the one who has achieved fame was even in the beginning neither audacious nor depraved.

M. Eugène Brieux entered the Théâtre Libre with a little pastoral comedy of a prodigal daughter. It was very pretty, very virtuous, but it was not revolution. And in the spirit of this innocuous trifle he has continued a terrible career. With a doubtful exception, his plays do not once touch the life they profess to reveal. They make little rushes at its conditions, inspired by what is undoubtedly a sincere indignation. There is hardly a social problem at which M. Brieux does not peck: working-class education in "*Blanchette*"; the injustice of the law in "*La Robe Rouge*"; the evils of betting (among the lower classes) in "*Le resultat des Courses*"; the abomination of forced motherhood in "*Maternité*"; sexual disease in "*Les Avariés*"; free love in "*Les Hanneçons*"—but enough of this catalogue. Let us see what M. Brieux, dramatic revolutionary and Academician, has accomplished.

Judge him first as social reformer. One of the most significant facts of modern life is expressed in an economic commonplace: the rich are becoming richer, the poor poorer. By the vastness of its import for the age, this fact demands that the artist should face it and interpret its meaning for humanity in the terms of his art. Even M. Brieux could not fail to see it: and he took a little run and jumped clean over it into "*Les Bienfaiteurs*." There he solves the problem of poverty with the originality and width of vision which made him an Academician. "Le devoir, c'est donc d'enfermer l'aumône dans une poignée de main. Il faut faire la charité avec discernement." Shut your eyes, my suffering brethren, and open your mouths, and see what Mr. Murphy, of Dublin and Hell, will give you.

* "*The Graces of Interior Prayer*," p. 93.

† *Ibid.* 86.

* The great sayings are alive like symbols and shape themselves with new life; rainbows flashing with the iridescence of ever richer meaning.

But if this question was too high for M. Brieux, what has he made of one far less important, the little matter of childless free love versus the chains of marriage. It is hardly possible to consider "Les Hamnetons" as a problem play. Free love presents no problem of importance, unless children are in question. Then it becomes a problem for the State, possibly for the philosopher, certainly for the least imaginative among the "advanced." But Pierre and Charlotte have no desire for the responsibility of parentage: they have not advanced to any measure of intellect, to any spiritual doubt. They are both incredibly dull and plebeian. Charlotte is also a very poor liar, stupidly sensual, and capable of the last meanness of a faked suicide. If the dramatist intended to prove that such free unions are as unhappy as legal and sanctified marriage, the case is not proved by the particular instance. Moreover, it is not worth proving. What there is of importance in the matter, the fate of the child, M. Brieux has wisely avoided, trimming his sails to suit the feeble breath of his inspiration.

"So a little mouse in wonder
Flicks his whiskers at the thunder."

And so M. Brieux mishandles every theme he touches, great or small, artistic and dramatic failure following on philosophic incompetence. In "Maternité" he attempts great things. But he does so in the spirit of a lecturer and not of an artist. Lucie, who protests against the shame of her forced motherhood, Annette who dies, are shadows which he clothes in a rhetorical indignation. True, there is a climax at the end of each act, but that rather clumsy craft hides nothing of the shallow oratory, the commonplace language. "Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont," as near drama as anything M. Brieux has manufactured, fails even as "Maternité," by reason of his artistic incapacity. Julie has a passionate love of children, and her husband will not have a child. The grace, the strength of character she half reveals disappears in a burst of platform indignation. Incapable of the first necessity of dramatic art, her author pushes her aside to deliver his feminist lecture, the very nearness of his approach to drama aggravating the failure.

The fate of Julie Dupont is typical. M. Brieux cannot interpret his age; he can only poke at the rotten places in its social fabric. He cannot create character: his men and women are soulless bores when they are not the puppets of his passion for rhetoric. He is incapable of dramatic action, for that implies the power of subduing even pain and terror to the beauty of pain, and to the greatness of man in defeat as in triumph. With neither wit nor grace, he has treated pain and evil with the comprehension of a politician, and the art of a third-rate journalist. Life is not in his drama, but he, serenely unaware, continues to study and prate of the rags that he has torn from her garment.

STORM JAMESON.

Schönberg, Epstein, Chesterton, and Mass-Rhythm.

[NOTICE that certain dull and obtuse persons are talking a great deal of nonsense about the *new direction of Art*. It sounds as though Art were that hard-working drinker, Jane Cakebread, about to take the pledge after a long period of total drunkenness. Of course what these dull and obtuse persons mean is that painters, sculptors, musicians and a playwright or two are seeking a direction. The direction they seek is one most likely to bring them within easy distance of, if not into actual contact

with Art itself. For many generations professed artists (i.e. artists by repute) have been separated by culture superstition and idolatry, from the spring and source and have been trying to experience humanity and its manifestations through the intellect and thereafter to fit them into the rhythm of life (or what they conceived to be the rhythm). In recent years it however occurred to some inquiring minds that these efforts were misdirected and instead of fitting something into something else they were engaged in the act of circumscribing and detaching. In consequence of this conviction they repudiated the intellect, removed the dunghill of materialism it had erected before their working-places and recovered human sensibility. On top of this came the return to nerves and individual temperament. And now it seems to me that a healthy sensitiveness prompts them to remove those vile checks to the flow of the rhythm which the folly of the ancients devised and the advanced stupidity of the moderns elaborated. Consciously or unconsciously, they seek to *feel* this rhythm and to create or devise a framework for the eternal flow into which the eternal spirit in human beings is to be drawn. Thus their works form symbols of a force which humanity possesses and through which it may renew itself.

It is not difficult to name some of those who are engaged in the good work of replacing great thought by great feeling having the simplicity and intensity which distinguishes the manifestations of the unconscious (wrongly called the sub-conscious) vision. In music there is Arnold Schönberg whose Five Orchestral Pieces were recently given, amid opposition, at the Queen's Hall. Schönberg's aim in these pieces is to loosen the great unending stream of emotion by removing the checks (in the form of motives) which modern technique has devised. Apparently he believes that motives are the sluice gates which the mind forms by reflecting on the emotions and the ideas and thoughts which spring from these, that they impede and weaken the flowing power of Art, and that they are to be removed by impulse through which alone the Art temperament works. In any case he has made a break from the form of Strauss, who stops to find a motive for every physical thing. Thus Strauss is concerned with weaving an intricate motive pattern which appeals solely to the intellect, while Schönberg expresses the big floating movement (I call it mass-rhythm) of the universal element which appeals to the soul in man. I suppose the reason why the critics do not appreciate Schönberg's recent work is because it is not logical enough to be understood by the intellect. A friend of mine, Mr. Ernest Gerrard, who is anxious to have Schönberg's music applied to his music-dramas, reminds me that this music resembles Picasso's pictures and the press comments to-day might be those published when I made Picasso known to London. Of course he means that Picasso's work is full of mass-music. It is the work of a sensible being and not of a logician or metaphysician.

The same element of mass-rhythm (or mass-music) appears in the sculpture by Jacob Epstein, especially that exhibited at the Twenty-one Gallery. Epstein's work is not merely an experiment in the elimination of motives. It exhibits a great flowing power, begins and ends nowhere, and defies logical analysis. I would say that it does reveal a sincere intention to take us into the cosmic rhythm. To me it has the same feeling as those very elemental things which express the universal flow and draw us into it. Perhaps only very elemental things can do this. I have a number of stones which I gathered on the sea shore. They have been moulded by the universal flow and express a variety of vital forms and colours. One represents the head of an Assyrian warrior. It is a calm, dignified and compelling piece of work. It might have been carved by a highly sensitive primitive. It is not fascinating in the Greek sense; it is fascinating in a truthful sense. It is without law

yet full of universal law. It draws the human soul into it and sets it expanding in harmony with the rhythm of the universe. The re-incarnated Greek would repudiate it as a work of art simply because he would be searching for something "created" by the faculty of understanding in that which is created by the strength, simplicity and intensity of feeling. Epstein's work carries us into the universal flow by its power, simplicity and intensity of feeling. In this respect it recalls the work of Matisse. It is full of mass-rhythm, or mass-music.

It is different with the productions of Mr. Roger Fry and the Grafton Group. Though they reveal amiable qualities they are not distinguished by the quality of sensibility. On the contrary they appear to be the result of an impossible attempt to "feel" phenomena through the intellect instead of through the senses, and to fit them into a scheme of "law and light" of their own. In looking at their pictures one never experiences the vital workings of feelings and impulses. And the question naturally arises, do these painters ever experience an emotion? Still with all their limitations their works are immeasurably above those of a self-styled group of neo-realists who under the direction of an L.C.C. "art" teacher continue to woo realism made up like a whore and with a whore's sickening leer.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton is also engaged framing mass-rhythm. In his play "Magic" he introduces a dramatic element to the stage which we have been awaiting with impatience. It is a hopeful sign when the most conservative form of mind begins to put the cosmos on the stage in an individual way, and thereby leaves no doubt that playwrights are beginning to *feel*, not *think*, upon a definite foundation of universal feeling. That Mr. Chesterton has done so I will prove when I review his play, a copy of which has been received from Martin Secker.

HUNTLY CARTER.

An Essay in Constructive Criticism.

WITH APOLOGIES TO MR. F- -D M-D-X H- -FF-R
IN THE "STOUTLOOK."

OF course you know, or, if you don't know, you jolly well ought to know that it's a jolly difficult job to introduce a sporting page into a quiet literary review like THE EGOIST. However golf is golf and as I have noticed—for I look about a bit and see a lot of things that you and your likes would never think of seeing—I have noticed, I was about to say, and will say in the run of a page or so that golfers get jolly narrow-minded and get into clubs and pay no attention to the great mass of people who don't know a ciek from a bunker, and I think it a perfect shame so I am going with a certain non-chalance to be sure, I am going to start some free and constructive criticism to broaden the golfing mind.

And now if you'd believe it, though you won't, for you don't run around with such a variegated lot of folk as I do, but there are a lot of nice quiet well-dressed people, not people like us who wear made-to-order boots and Scotch tweed, but nevertheless people whose opinion the golfing world should attend to. There are a lot of such people, members of the saddlers' guild and of the protective Dorcas association who go whole days with never a hole of golf or so much as reading the newspaper accounts of the matches.

And of course this is journalism and this is der alte England (perfidie albion, my aunt Cynthia always used to call it) so I can't get on to my point much

quicker than I'm doing at present. And any way there are a lot of silly golfing prejudices to be got rid of before we can chat comfortably together. Now prejudice is a very grave thing and a very Jutish thing and there is a lot to be said about Jules and gravity but I'm on prejudice and that reminds me of a prejudice of my own about a chap who used to use pink clubs. Always hated that chap for using pink clubs but now by jingo after all these years, and I think it a crying shame that even I had to wait ten years to get over that prejudice and find out what a fine game he plays . . . just my sort of game. He don't play golf, he just gives the impression of it. . . . Beautiful form, of course not much direction—THANK GOD! not much direction . . . doesn't get his ball into the holes but that is a rather silly thing to do with a golf-ball anyhow. And I think it a crying shame with Ouimet winning a cup in America that that splendid chap with the pink golf clubs has never had his due recognition among golfers. I do Indeed, my dear friend.

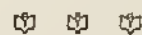
Well now there's a friend of my aunt's who practically never plays golf, or rather he don't play the regulation golf, shinny he calls it, hits the ball all right, it's a game like hockey or Celtic hurling . . . but I hate everything Celtic. But it doesn't much matter, my point is that golfers ought to quit playing golf that is only appreciated by golfers. They ought to play a good vigorous colloquial sort of game that will appeal to chaps like myself who have a go at literature in our spare moments. They ought to play the sort of golf that interests one's literary friends, if one's got 'em. It's silly to get clubs that appeal to a golfer and not to an artist like Wyndham Lewis. And if you only ran about with literary and artistic people like I do you'd jolly well see that the country will go to pot if the British golfer don't broaden his mind, and throw away his stupid conventions.

Now I'm not a member of any golf club. I don't like that sort of organisation, it limits the game. But they wanted me to protest to the committee. Dam the committee says I (like my friend Bullheim who resigned from the House of Lords because he didn't like the sort of Jews he had to meet there), you want me to bring a perfectly obscure body of men into the glare of publicity, you want me to martyrise 'em and establish 'em in the hearts of the people. I jolly well won't. And that reminds me of another golfer or rather he was a pugilist, John L. Sullivan, and he was an out an' outer till he was done for by Fitzsimmons (*vide foot-note*). Well anyhow despite my uncle's interruption Sullivan gave the impression of being a sportsman and the only thing that matters is the impression. So in following numbers I'm going to instruct the reader in constructive criticism of golf by giving my impression of such noted golfers as Rachel Annand Taylor, R. A. Scott-James, Joseph Conrad and Christina Rossetti.

HERRMANN KARL GEORG JESUS MARIA.

FOOT-NOTE.—My grand nephew in law is at this, as at most points, wilfully mendacious. It was not Fitzsimmons but "Gentleman Jim" Corbett who, in my grand nephew in law's vulgar phrase, "did for" Mr. John L. Sullivan, who now has a public house named after him on Lower Broadway, New York, not far from Walt Whitman's old Dwelling.

Your obedient svt. WILLIAM MICHAEL R-S-TTI.



THE HORSES OF DIOMEDES.

NOTE.—The final chapters of this work cannot appear until March 1st. This delay is caused by our wish to comply with regulations necessary to preserve M. De Gourmont's American copyrights.—THE EDITORS.

Modern Writers on "Chastity."

"The Glory of the world is seen only by a chaste mind," said Thoreau with his fine extravagance. "To whomsoever this fact is not an awful but beautiful mystery, there are no flowers in nature. Without chastity it is impossible to maintain the dignity of sexual love. The society in which its estimation sinks to a minimum is in the last stages of degeneration. Chastity has for sexual love an importance which it can never lose, least of all to-day."

It is quite true that during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many men of high moral and intellectual distinction pronounced very decidedly their condemnation of the idea of chastity. The great Buffon refused to recognise chastity as an ideal and referred scornfully to "That kind of insanity which has turned a girl's virginity into a thing with real existence," while William Morris, in his down-right manner, once declared . . . that asceticism is "The most disgusting vice that afflicted human nature." Blake, though he seems always to have been a strictly moral man in the most conventional sense, felt nothing but contempt for chastity, and sometimes confers a kind of religious solemnity on the idea of unchastity. Shelley, who may have been unwise in sexual matters, but can scarcely be called unchaste, also often seems to associate religion and morality, not with chastity, but with unchastity, and much the same must be said of James Hinton.

For Blake and for Shelley, as well as, it may be added, for Hinton, chastity, as Todhunter remarks in his "Study of Shelley," is "a type of submission to the actual, a renunciation of the infinite, and is therefore hated by them. The chaste man, i.e., the man of prudence and self-control is the man who has lost the nakedness of his primitive innocence."

But all these men—with other men of high character who have pronounced similar opinions—were reacting against false, decayed, and conventional forms of chastity. They were not rebelling against an ideal; they were seeking to set up an ideal in a place where they realised that a mischievous pretence was masquerading as a moral reality.

"We cannot accept an ideal of chastity unless we ruthlessly cast aside all the unnatural and empty forms of chastity. If chastity is merely a fatiguing effort to emulate in the sexual sphere the exploits of professional fasting men, an effort using up all the energies of the organism and resulting in no achievement greater than the abstinence it involves, then it is surely an unworthy ideal. If it is a feeble submission to an external conventional law which there is no courage to break, then it is not an ideal at all. If it is a rule of morality imposed by one sex on the opposite sex, then it is an injustice and provocative of revolt. If it is an abstinence from the usual forms of sexuality, replaced by more abnormal or more secret forms, then it is simply an unreality based on misconception. And if it is merely an external acceptance of conventions without any further acceptance, even in act, then it is a contemptible farce. These are the forms of chastity which during the past two centuries many fine-souled men have vigorously rejected.

. . . In considering the moral quality of chastity among savages, we must carefully separate that chastity which among semi-primitive peoples is exclusively imposed upon women. This has no moral quality whatever, for it is not exercised as a useful discipline, but merely enforced in order to heighten the economic and erotic value of the women. . . . Under such conditions a woman's chastity has an

important social function to perform, being, as Mrs. Monia Caird has put it ("The Morality of Marriage," 1897, p. 88), the watchdog of man's property. The fact that no element of ideal morality enters into the question is shown by the usual absence of any demand for anti-nuptial chastity in the husband.

. . . Westermarck concludes that "irregular connections between the sexes have, on the whole, exhibited a tendency to increase along with the progress of civilisation."

"As long as Danaë was free," remarks Ferrand in his sixteenth century treatise, "De la Maladie d'Amour," "she was chaste." And Sir Kenelm Digby, the ladies' representative of the Renaissance spirit, insists in his Private Memoirs that the liberty which Lycinurus, "the wisest human law-maker that ever was," gave to women to communicate their bodies to men to whom they were drawn by noble affection . . . was the true cause why "real chastity flourished in Sparta more than in any other part of the world."

. . . From the eighteenth century onwards . . . the conception of the physical virtue of virginity had degraded the conception of the spiritual virtue of chastity. A mere routine, it was felt, prescribed to a whole sex whether they would or not, could never possess the beauty and charm of virtue. At the same time it began to be realised that, as a matter of fact, the state of compulsory virginity is not only not a state especially favourable to the cultivation of *real* virtues, but that it is bound up with qualities which are no longer regarded as of high value. The basis of this feeling was strengthened when it was shown by scholars that the physical virtue of "virginity" had been masquerading under a false name. To remain a virgin seems to have meant, among peoples of early Aryan culture, by no means to take a vow of chastity, but to refuse to submit to the yoke of patriarchal marriage. The women who preferred to stand outside marriage were "virgins," even though mothers of large families.

. . . "How arbitrary, artificial, contrary to Nature, is the life now imposed upon women in this matter of chastity!" wrote James Hinton forty years ago. "Think of that line: 'A woman who deliberates is lost.' We *make* danger, making all womankind hang upon a point like this and surrounding it with unnatural and preternatural dangers. There is a wanton unreason embodied in the life of woman now; the present 'virtue' is a morbid unhealthy plant. Nature and God never poised the life of a woman upon such a needle's point. The whole modern idea of chastity has in it sensual exaggeration, surely, in part, remaining to us from other times, with what was good in it in great part gone."

"The whole grace of virginity," wrote another philosopher, Guyan, "is ignorance. Virginity, like certain fruits, can only be preserved by a process of desiccation."

. . . Dr. H. Paul. She writes: "There are girls who, even as children, have prostituted (?) themselves by masturbation and lascivious thoughts. The purity of their souls has long been lost and nothing remains unknown to them but—they have preserved their hymens! That is for the sake of the future husband. Let no one dare to doubt their innocence with that unimpeachable evidence! . . . Yet the 'dishonoured' woman, who is sound and wholesome, need not fear to tell what she has done to the man who desires her in marriage, speaking as one human being to another. She has no need to blush, she has exercised her human rights, and no reasonable man will on that account esteem her the less."

. . . As, however we liberate ourselves from the bondage of a compulsory physical chastity, it becomes possible to rehabilitate chastity as a virtue.

. . . The mystic value of virginity has gone; it seems only to arouse in the modern man's mind the idea of a piquancy craved by the hardened rake; it is

Quoted by kind permission of Mr. Havelock-Ellis from "Studies in the Psychology of Sex" by Havelock-Ellis. Published in Philadelphia by F. A. Davis Company, 1911.

men who have themselves long passed the age of innocence who attach so much importance to the "innocence" of their brides. . . . And the conventional simulation of universal chastity at the bidding of respectability, is coming to be regarded as a hindrance rather than a help to the cultivation of any real chastity.

. . . There is always an analogy between the instinct of reproduction and the instinct of nutrition . . . as James Hinton pointed out: "In eating we have achieved the task of combining pleasure with an absence of 'lust.' The problem for man and woman is to so use and possess the sexual passion as to make it the minister to higher things, with no restraint on it than that. It is essentially connected with things of the spiritual order, and would naturally revolve round them. To think of it as merely bodily is a mistake.

. . . The influence of Nietzsche, direct and indirect, has been on the side of the virtue of chastity in its modern sense.

"A relative chastity," he wrote, "a fundamental and wise foresight in the face of erotic things, even in thought, is part of a fine reasonableness in life, even in richly-endowed and complete natures."

"Only the chaste can be really obscene," said Huysmans. And on a higher plane only the chaste can love.

"Physical purity," remarks Hans Menjaga, ". . . can only possess value when it is the result of individual strength of character, and not when it is the result of compulsory rules of morality."

We may not always be inclined to believe the writers who have declared that their verse alone is wanton, but their lives chaste. It is certainly true, however, that a relationship of this kind tends to occur. For in the words of Landor, "Absence is the invisible and incorporeal mother of ideal beauty."

In thus understanding asceticism and chastity, and their beneficial functions in life, we see that they occupy a place midway between the artificially exaggerated position they once held and that to which they were degraded by the inevitable reaction of total indifference or actual hostility which followed.

BEEBAN AND NOEL TEULON PORTER.

Correspondence.

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS. While quite willing to publish letters under *noms de plume*, we make it a condition of publication that the name and address of each correspondent should be supplied to the Editor. Etc.

PASSION V. THE SUFFRAGETTES,

OR

"HONI SOIT QUI MAL Y PENSE."

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

On page 44 of THE EGOIST for February 2nd, 1914, is a frank, straightforward review for which the Editor and the writer should be congratulated. This review (under "Views and Comments") handles a part of the sex question splendidly. But there is more to be said, of course. Could not "Views and Comments" for February 2nd be considered the first of a series about men and women and their sex relations. Let us continue to treat men and women as human beings and not as steam rollers, sewing machines, or problems in Algebra.

It has been almost forgotten that the sexual needs of a woman are at least as great as those of a man. We have been told that respectable women only submit themselves to their husbands. What ROT! They submit themselves to a physical law, a need that is older than humanity—voilà tout. A woman who does not thrill into delirious pleasure, and satisfied, relax into calm, drowsy happiness, is either married to a fool, a brute, or a weakling, or her husband is.

Lust, passion and love are, as will be admitted by all, words, mere words. Our attitude towards these unfortunate words has been that of middle-class virgins towards public women. "We simply don't know them! We can't," they say. And they turn curious, furtive eyes to watch the poor things down the street. Well, they are right! Most of us know very little about passion or love. Many of us are physically incapable of knowing anything about either! But let us speak of normal men and normal women, not of deformities. I do not believe that there is any "Normal woman who regards the sex act

as the final pledge of her faith and her love." A woman who thinks of the sex-act as a "duty" thinks of her man, poor fellow, as a lustful brute. A woman who thinks of the sex-act as a high and beautiful moment, the perfect and satisfying expression of her body, thinks of her man as her lover, the adored one; and so thinks he of her. (And he may be the same man in both cases!)

A couple physically and mentally fitted *may* be happy though married. But every man in the world should know either by instinct or by experience how to make his partner "éprouver un émoi aussi satisfaisant que le sien." A man who does not know this, and how to do this, should not marry until he does. In France "un mari trompé par sa femme" is an object of ridicule or pity—pity for his ignorance, ridicule for some possible lack in him. Once again the French are right.

So far, in England and America, we men have had to depend for our knowledge on the lessons taught us by courtesans, our instincts (such as remain to us), and our experiences, and our mistakes. What a list of teachers! And for the most important chair our "civilisation" endows.

One of the United States again contributes to the hilarity of the elect by passing and trying to enforce a Eugenic Marriage law. Marriages in that State have decreased by about eighty per cent. As Mr. Chesterton said in one of his books: "The first act of healthy men bred under medical supervision would be to smash the medical supervision."* No male who is a man and no female who is a woman would tolerate for one single instant any intrusion into their marriage chamber. I know of one case at least where an intruder would have his eyes and hair pulled out, his ear bitten off, would have got two kicks in the stomach, and had his skull smashed in by the back of a chair within seven and three-tenths seconds after opening the door. It would not matter in the least whether the intruder was a State-appointed doctor or an investigating Suffragette.

If 90 per cent. of men suffer from some contagious venereal disease, and 45 per cent. of women have an inherited and inheritable taint, then the question of venereal disease becomes academic, unless we intend to force every healthy man to take unto his bosom six and seven-tenths healthy wives! Do the Suffragettes suggest this as their solution of the problem? Has it not been proved that one wife is enough for any man, and often too much?

Measles has been known to wipe out entire tribes of Redskins and Esquimaux. We have outgrown measles as we will some day outgrow syphilis. Ignorance of sex-anatomy, lack of sex-consideration, blindness to the psychology of sex-desire, sex-pleasure, and sex-satisfaction cause to-day more misery, illness and hatred than all other causes whatsoever, venereal disease included.

As for prostitution—well, what are we going to do about it? Consider the following three points:—

(1.) That, as prostitution is suppressed, rape and seduction increase. (Take your choice.)

(2.) That a man was intended by nature to enjoy the sex-act at least five years before he can legitimately enjoy it at present. (Again take your choice.)

(3.) That fool and sexual subjects are seldom fought over except by people who have too little or too much. Men and women who are leading a normal, healthy sex-life seldom bother their heads about sex.

I do not think that Miss Christabel Pankhurst will claim to know more about this matter than I. I will be very glad to study, discuss, and learn from any points brought up by her or anyone else either in the columns of THE EGOIST or by private correspondence. Sex is too important to be hidden, and heaven help those who ever try to "suppress" it. The only immoral way of looking at the sex-act is as though it were a luxury. It is not. The sex-act as a normal, regular, and completed function is as necessary as eating. For men and women to be really happy they must be healthy animals; to be healthy animals they must perform with reasonable regularity *all* the functions of their animal natures; therefore, to lead the "higher" life, we must first satisfy our "lower" (?) instincts. God save us all from sexual constipation.

Most "broad-heads" will agree with these remarks; it does not matter whether the "long-heads," thin-heads, pin-heads, and fat-heads agree or not. For all of me, they may disbelieve (or say they do), and act according to their disbelief, and continue to be deceived by their wives, newspapers, preachers, and by themselves.

I hope that some "broad-head" will carry this discussion one step further than I have been able. It might even be possible to exhume the truth. What a resurrection—for England.

* I quote from memory.

US—AND STANDARD IDEAS.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

Your issue of Feb. 2nd is the only recent one I have enjoyed at all. You are quite beyond me. I do think you are too contemptuous of people with whom you disagree. You make me feel quite a worm, which probably I am; but still it is not encouraging. You yourself are constantly changing. It is not so very long ago that you were W.S.P.U. organiser at Southport. (I always used to read your report first in "Voices for Women.") You probably thought you were right then. It seems to me silly to be contemptuous of people who really are trying to get at Truth.

H. B. C.

I believe in Women's Suffrage quite honestly, because I think that women will be treated badly on the whole till they are considered equal with men. At present women can't go out country walks alone unarmed without risk. I may be wrong, but it doesn't help me much to be jeered at.

Have you any of the standard ideas? I mean (I know I am clumsy) are you, e.g., what is usually called "honest"? You said, I think, that such things as liberty, fraternity, equality, and numerous other things amongst which was honesty (was it not?) were bunkum. Do you mean that you run up tradesmen's bills and then don't pay them? Or that if you had a visitor you would feel justified in picking his pocket? What is honesty? I sometimes wonder whether you are in earnest, or only buffooning!

WM. A. WILLIAMS.

[A reference is made to the above in a current editorial article.—ED., THE EGOIST.]

A GLORIOUS PHRASE.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

The following sentence, "She was so fine, and she was so healthy that you could have tracked a flea on either one of her breasts," is quoted by a writer on "John Synge, and the Habits of Criticism" in the last issue of the EGOIST, and is characterised by the writer as "*that glorious phrase in literature*." How can it be considered glorious to impose a smart slap on so delicate a portion of the body? Would not the fine healthiness have been equally admired had a beautiful shoulder been the medium of attack? It is no squeamishness which causes my remark, but simply the feeling induced of cruelty and the possibility of dire results—certainly not "*glorious*."

M. E. A.

THE POETS—NEW SCHOOL.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

I am persuaded that you will pardon this outbreak from one whose sole and slight claim upon your attention is that of a retired humble scholar, albeit one who peruses your pages with pleasure and profit. I am one of those, Madam, who have their Tully and their Plato nearer to their hearts than the fantastical, lisping, mincing strepitations of our ill-instructed youth; and I have been the more displeased to note that you give harbour and assistance to many of these barbarous innovators who, under plea of invention, betterment of the language, fine imagination, and I know not what maggot-headed devices, have spewed forth their detilement and have called it poetry! These be those canting, hypocritical fellows who stand so much upon the new form that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench. These be those that will strip, forsooth! the delicate, chiming, well-conceited pleasure of rhyme from us, who, under cover of the example of those restless, impatient, fantastical Frenchmen, will have us to write poetry without either wit or measure. These be those that would have us think they have read all authors ever born, that they are conversant with all languages, periods, sciences, arts, and what not; when in very truth they have little but titles and rags and tatters of knowledge for their learning.

I would not be so impertinent to trouble you, Madam, did I not feel that in giving currency to the scrofulous productions of these adolescents you render yourself as well as them obnoxious to the censure of all grave and well-learned gentlefolk in this realm. And that you may know how truly foolish, reprehensible, and utterly contemptible such writings are, I will quote here for your better reading a piece from one of the letters of the late Mr. Charles Lamb, a very good writer and honest gentleman. Observe that this piece was written solely for mirth's sake, a jocus, a nuga; and then observe how closely it is imitated by these young sirs who would have us take them and their writing seriously and for weighty matters. Thus Mr. Lamb:—

VIVE L'AGRICULTURE.

"How do you make your pigs so little?"

"They are vastly engaging at the age:

I was so myself.

Now I am a disagreeable old hog;

A middle-aged gentleman-and-a-half,

My faculties (thank God) are not much impaired."

Which the judicious editor of Mr. Lamb's correspondence is gravely perturbed with, fearing lest his author should appear less worthy than he would otherwise be judged, and therefore appends this note: "The passage as Lamb wrote it must have run in plain prose shape." For me to say more, Madam, would be to trespass upon your kindness. I only ask you to consider the matter dispassionately and to ask yourself whether limitations of a great man's joke are to be passed off upon an honourable nation as the productions of genius, good-sense, and learning?

ACCEPTS.

A CORRECTION.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

By some slight error, my note entitled "The Bourgeois" has appeared over the signature of my brother, Bastien von Helmholtz.

BAPTISTE VON HELMHOLTZ.

[We offer to our contributor sincere apologies for the oversight.—

ED., THE EGOIST.]

THE UNIMPORTANCE OF ART.

To the Editor, THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

The contents of THE EGOIST convince me of the unimportance of Art. You might treat Art as you have treated "Progress," "Duty," and other abstract notions, for it is as deserving.

There have been periods when Artists, if they were not more numerous than at present, had greater dominance. In such periods the conditions prevailing were less favourable than are those of to-day for other people, the ordinary folk who had no part in the Art cult. This being so, your contributor who asserts (p. 32) that "man might have ascended to Heaven by means of Art, has descended to Hell for lack of it," can mean the Artists' Heaven and Hell only.

To assert that the Artist is a corporeal personification of spiritual force, and the non-Artist a personification of material force, is merely an attempt at classification, and one as primitive as the division of people into Jews and Gentiles, Christian and heathen.

The Artist has done little for mankind and much for himself. That was to be expected. We will admit that an Artist must express himself. That is his concern. Having expressed himself he should be content with that. Instead, he wishes recognition for his more or less successful self-expression in Art, whether this takes the form of a shaped stone, the massing of diverse colours, or whatever way satisfies him. The fact remains that though we may love a particular artist as an individual, we may not care at all for what he expresses in material. We should like him, or dislike him, whether he expressed himself successfully or unsuccessfully, or not at all. His Art is wholly unimportant in comparison with the value we attach to him as a person. For Art is merely a cult, valued by those to whom it appeals and practically worthless to others. It is not capable of universal application.

An Artist may state (p. 58) that "being born of Artists (and therefore a natural aristocrat by birth), I arrived in a greater state of purity than the society I was born in," but alone that is not convincing. Being born of Artists does not necessarily make one an Artist, nor a natural aristocrat—whatever that may be. If by "natural aristocrat" one cognates a superior man, being born of Arabs in the desert is more likely to convey superiority in physique, grace, character, and purity of race. An Arab Sheikh may pass his life in what appears to us to be aimless wandering about the desert with his flocks and herds. His ablutions may be rare and scanty; he may think more of his mares than of his four or five wives who accompany him on his journeys, travelling in a sort of darkened hencoop on the back of a dromedary; but if you estimate personal worth by the possession of manly virtues, you may seek the wide world without finding his equal.

Art has not conditioned life greatly or generally. Not to the same extent as have the despised industrial and mechanical arts. Are we to esteem Art merely because it is rare? Any extreme expression of individuality, though it pertains to infinity, must appeal to very few, whilst for a Birmingham button almost everybody has some use. The Art that counts is the art of living—an art contributors to THE EGOIST seem inclined to overlook. I have compared THE EGOIST with THE FREEWOMAN of 1912, and about the latter—written mostly by women—there is less Art and more life.

W. GERRARD.

— Note. —

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